

VZCZCXRO9326
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #1987/01 2141400
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 021400Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3248
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8264
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3101
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 2184
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6038
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5857
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2453
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001987

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2007

In Today's Papers

Speculation Continues on Presidency

All papers continue speculating on the topic of Turkey's next president. Mainstream papers say it is unclear whether Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul is still the AKP's candidate for the top job, or whether Gul will withdraw his candidacy due to opposition from the military General Staff. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet claims Prime Minister Erdogan has asked Gul to refrain from running for presidency, but Gul turned the PM down by saying now there is "no obstacle" left in front of him. Gul is expected to announce on August 6 whether he will remain in the race, according to Cumhuriyet. Papers say Gul may be given the post of Parliament Speaker if he does not run for President. Papers also say Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul is again emerging as a possible compromise candidate if Gul withdraws.

Iraqi PM to Visit Turkey

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others report that next week Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is to visit Turkey as the official guest of his Turkish counterpart Erdogan. Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Spokesman Levent Bilman told the press Maliki is expected to be in Turkey August 6-8. Yeni Safak says Erdogan will give Maliki intelligence reports regarding the PKK activities in northern Iraq and the organization's offices in Baghdad. Erdogan is expected to call for coordinated action among Iraq, Turkey and the US to fight against the PKK. The sides will discuss a project for building a new natural gas pipeline parallel to the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik line between the two countries. Turks will also raise the issue of the problems Turkish contractors face in the reconstruction of Iraq.

GAO Report: Thousands of US Weapons Missing in Iraq

Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report the US government cannot account for 190,000 weapons issued to Iraqi security forces in 2004 and 2005, according to a report made public by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on Wednesday. Commenting on the GAO report, "Stabilizing Iraq: DOD Cannot Ensure

that US-Funded Equipment Has Reached Iraqi Security Forces," mainstream papers question whether the weapons went to the PKK and liberal Radikal says "the US blames Iran and Syria for giving weapons to the Iraqi insurgents, but 190,000 of its own weapons are unaccounted for." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak quotes US military spokesman in Iraq, General Kevin Bergner, as saying they were investigating claims that some members of the Iraqi military sold weapons from arms caches for which they were responsible.

Editorial Commentary on Alleged US-Turkey Operation against the PKK

Oktay Eksi writes in the mainstream daily Hurriyet: "While the AKP figures use strong words about the urgent need for a cross-border operation and ask the US to understand that, news came from Washington. The Washington Post article by Robert Novak undermined yet another plan to fight against the PKK. The PKK leadership in Northern Iraq can now do business as usual and act freely. On the other hand, such fiascos do not come as a surprise any longer since we saw too many of them in the past. This is all about our so-called strategic partner who keeps fooling the Turkish people all the time. Going through the newspaper archives, starting in 2003, one can see clearly how many times Turkey was told and promised by the US that they would disarm the PKK and fight against the PKK in Northern Iraq. Obviously the so-called efforts by the US against the PKK did not bring any tangible result for us. Moreover while we expected the US would collect the weapons from PKK, exactly the opposite is happening -- the PKK has started using American weapons against us. Given all this, the leak of the secret operation plan against the PKK does not come as a surprise."

Turkey Files a Complaint to the UN Against Austria
Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Yeni Safak and others: During the

ANKARA 00001987 002 OF 003

weekly press briefing, MFA spokesman Levent Bilman said regarding the release of PKK leader Riza Altun from Austria to Iraq that Turkey had filed a complaint against Austria with the European Security and Cooperation Organization and soon "will present the UN with the same kind of complaint."

Water Shortage in Ankara

All papers report that Ankara Metropolitan Municipality implemented a water rationing system, cutting off water to alternating halves of the city every two days for a period of up to five months. Mainstream Milliyet wrote the State Water Works (DSI) Director said that if the drought continues water cuts could be increased to four days a week. DSI stated that Metropolitan Mayor Melih Gokcek had been warned about water problem in June 2004, in an official letter saying that construction should start immediately to bring water to Ankara from Gerede. Hurriyet claims that Treasury invited Melih Gokcek to talk about the expenses of this project. However, Gokcek rejected this proposal with a written statement saying that "as the municipality, we do not want to increase our debt. Our priority is not the drinking water but the metro [subway] project. We will reserve all our financial resources for our privileged metro project."

Editorial Commentary on US Arms Sales to Arab States

Sami Kohen wrote in the mainstream daily Milliyet (8/2): "The recently-announced US military aid package is a clear indication of the American long-term strategy to maintain its presence and influence in the Middle East. Having strategic partnerships with the countries in this region is certainly the most efficient way to realize that goal. The trip by Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates to the region is a significant step toward promoting this project. The main question is whether these countries really need such a huge weapons package? According to US strategists there is definitely a need for arming Arabs given Iran's military power and threat. In fact the US wants to create a regional front against Iran and against its supporters, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas; not to even mention the huge revenues that would result from this sale. However this plan contains some risks. What if these 'friendly regimes' change their stances and those weapons fall into the hands of others? What if Russia wants to be a supplier in the arms race? And what about the effect on the Sunni-Shiite conflict in the region? The fact of the matter is that the Middle East needs fewer

weapons not more."

TV Highlights
NTV

Domestic News

- Three Turkish soldiers and five outlawed PKK militants were killed in clashes in the eastern province of Tunceli.
- Prime Minister Erdogan was briefed on the current political and military situation at the High Military Council meeting Wednesday.
- Finance Ministry will reduce public spending by the end of the year.
- Nineteen people were killed and 64 others were injured in traffic accidents across Turkey yesterday.

International News

- Turkey submitted a list of candidates for a vacant seat in the European Court of Human Rights to the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe.
- The USS Enterprise aircraft carrier arrived in the Middle East on Wednesday, replacing two carriers that had left the Gulf after a

ANKARA 00001987 003 OF 003

months-long deployment.

- The UN Security Council has passed a resolution mandating a 26,000-strong "hybrid" force to take over peacekeeping in Darfur from 7,000 Australian troops.
- A Hamas official said Wednesday Russia has invited a Hamas delegation to visit Moscow in the next few days.

MCELDOWNEY